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Project

Memo: JRX-3704

24 June 1946

TO : SAINT, JJ2

FROM : SAINT, BBS *BBS*

SUBJECT: Clandestine Expatriation of Jews to Palestine.

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B26
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2008

SOURCE : JK/1 (information date 26 May 1946)

1. On 19 May 1946 the Turkish motor-ship Lufti Lahi arrived at Gallipoli (Lecce) port, with 14 Italian sailors. It was ascertained that these sailors were members of the crews of the motor-ships Noris and Rondine, which had taken Jews from Italy to Palestine.

2. The 14 Italians are being held in custody at Gallipoli, while the local police await orders from the Ministry of the Interior. Through the interrogation of the sailors it has been possible to ascertain the following:

a) About the beginning of January 1946 the motor-ship Rondine left from an unidentified port and at another undisclosed port on the Tyrrhenian coast took several hundred Jews on board. The Noris left Venice port at the beginning of March 1946 and embarked several hundred Jews at an unspecified port on the Istrian coast. It is believed that the Jews were former internees in German concentration camps.

b) The two ships were successful in eluding the vigilance of British patrols along the Palestinian coast, and the Jews landed safely. The crews of the two ships also landed in Palestine, abandoning the boats.

c) The Italian sailors stayed for some time at a village on the coast. At the beginning of May 1946 they were embarked on a small motor-boat and later on the Lufti Lahi. After calling at Bodrum port the Lufti Lahi sailed for Gallipoli.

3. The following is a list of the names of the 14 sailors, most of whom, however, had no identification cards.

a) Mario KENDA, di Rodolfo and Caterina SANSINI, born at Trieste on 7 February 1917, living at No. 8 Via Pascoli, Trieste: Skipper.

b) Bruno Albano STEFFE, fu Vittorio and Giustina TRENIL, born at Capodistria on 26 July 1927, living at No. 14 Via Tigor, Trieste.

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- c) Costante MASSALIN, di Costante and Domenica MASSALIN, born at San Giacomo Di Neresine (Pola) on 28 October 1904, who gave his address as c/o CLN Giuliano, Venice.
- d) Riccardo MELINCO, di Marco and Anna Cerrai, born at Orsara (Pola) on 30 August 1908, living at No. 57, Viale Miramare, Trieste, with the NICOLI family.
- e) Gino SIGONI (father unknown) and di Mattea SIGONI, born at Neresine (Pola) on 17 December 1921. Address: c/o CLN Giuliano, Venice.
- f) Umberto DAMINI, di Achille and Giovanna ONGARA, born at Trieste on 24 November 1904, living at No. 3, Via Ghirlandaio, Trieste.
- g) Giovanni SICCARDI, di Giovan Battista and Maria POGGI, born at Albissola Marina (Savona) on 14 July 1910, living at No. 25, Via Stefano Grosso, Albissola Marina.
- h) Giovanni PAVIA, fu Pasquale and fu Maria STAITI, born at Canzirri (Messina) on 17 March 1905, living at No. 25, Via Briocco, Savona.
- i) Angelo BIAGINI, fu Vittorio and Angela PETRUCCI, born at Chiusino (Siena) on 13 December 1907, living at No. 1, Via Domenico Nano, Savona.
- j) Ferdinando VALENTINI, di Giovanni and Maria FRANCERI, born at Savona on 28 January 1925, living at No. 10, Via Fertinace, Savona.
- k) Domenico CAGNACCI, fu Vincenzo and Maria Luisa PILETTA, born at San Remo on 15 March 1892, living at No. 19, Via Giancardini, Valeggia (Savona).
- l) Mario LA ROVERE, di Federico and Giuseppina COLOMBO, born at Albissola Marina (Savona) on 17 April 1921, living at No. 4, Via Isola, Albissola Marina.
- m) Pietro ASTE, fu Agostino and fu Caterina DURANTE, born at Carloforte (Cagliari) on 22 March 1889, living at No. 5, Via Mobilat, Albissola Marina.
- n) Franco BALESTERRO, di Luciano and Rosina MILANESI, born at Ponte Curone (Alessandria) on 17 August 1924, living at No. 1, Via Emilia, Ponte Curone.

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4. Agan MAZLUM, a Turkish subject, was in command of the Lufti Lahi. Mario KENDA, believed to be a former lieutenant in the Italian Royal Navy, was in command of the Noris. Most likely KENDA is one of the chiefs of the clandestine organization inasmuch as it was he who engaged the crew. He has so far refused to answer any questions, declaring that he was bound by oath.
5. The crew of the Noris consisted of STEFFE', MASSALIN, MELINCO, SIGONI, DAMINI and SICCARDI.
6. According to SIGONI's statement, KENDA is in contact with one Eugenio CAMALI, a shipbuilder at Venice, living at Lido di Venezia. CAMALI is the head of the Tullier SS Co., with offices in Calle Valleresso, opposite the "Albergo Monaco", Venice. SIGONI thought that CAMALI too had something to do with the clandestine organization.
7. Prior to their leaving Bodrum, KENDA promised to give Agan MAZLUM 180 gold sovereigns upon their arrival in Italy. One Bose COHEN testified to the veracity of this arrangement.
8. The whole crew of the Rondine was engaged through the Savona port authorities. The sailors expressed their view that the said authorities knew of the purpose and destination of the voyage, since the Rondine, prior to her departure, was outfitted for the accommodation of a great many passengers.
9. It seems that the two ships were bound either for Brindisi or Bari where, it is believed the clandestine organization has its headquarters. Owing to bad weather conditions, however, the two ships made for Gallipoli port. It was planned that the crews would reach either Bari or Brindisi by land.

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